

## Rocket Man

by Still Bullet

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Summary: You know the achievement, and you know the pain that came with it. But have you ever wondered what Alyx was thinking while Gordon was running around with a random gnome all that time? Episode 2 one-shot. Marking my official comeback after a two-year absence from FF!

## Rocket Man

\_GUESS WHO'S ACTUALLY ALIVE?\_

\_Yes, hello everyone! It's literally been two years since I submitted a story here, and a year since I've actually signed into this account. If you want the big, messy reason for it, please see my profile-basically though, I've been somewhat back since the very end of May, although I haven't really done anything other than check my messages (which I haven't gotten any.) It's been a very long time since I've written something, so long that I actually forgot how to write; but, after some practice, I think I'm finally on to something!\_

\_Anyway, this story marks my official comeback-I'll be posting more stuff on here hopefully soon! (I've already got a few stories in the process, which I'm really excited about.) It's been a really long time since I've written a Half-Life story, and even longer since I've actually played it (Episode 2 isn't really my favorite,) but I figured since that's what I'm known for, what better way to make a comeback? This story isn't really anything exciting, but it's an idea I had for a while and I figured it'd be easier to start off slow. I hope some of my old fans are still here, and I hope that any new readers will enjoy my work! Anyway, let's get going with this.\_

\_\*\*Based on: Half-Life 2: Episode 2 (property of Valve; this is merely a fan piece.)

><strong>\*\*Rating: K because there's really not much here to worry

about

><strong>\_\_\*\*Word Count: Just a little under 1,500 words, so it's short and sweet

>Quick Notes: (yes I'm changing the way I do this stuff here). I flat-out hated this achievement, and I can't believe I managed to finish it with a sane mind. But, I always thought how funny my adventures with that gnome would have looked to Alyx, and thus, a quick little humor story for you all. Please enjoy! (And this, this is pretty much based on my own attempt at carrying the damn thing.)<strong>\_\_

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><p>The combination of greens and browns that made up Alyx's irises drifted from one little detail to the other, the colors of the object reflecting in a warped mirror image through her pupils. She stared at the little gnome with such curiosityâ€"or maybe more confusionâ€"as she wiped off the dirt that covered its face. She couldn't get it: what did Gordon see in this? Its expression was rather cheery, yet ridiculous; it almost reminded her of a joke gift that you would get for that one friend you were allowed to hate at times since you've known them for so long. She wondered if that described her relationship with Gordon now, but considering how intent they were at reaching White Forest, and avoiding all these damn Combine ambushes, now wasn't really the time for jokes. Maybe it was his idea of a sympathy gift for when she was stabbed in the back by that Hunter, like a "Sorry you nearly died, that must have sucked," sort of thing. But no, Gordon didn't really have a sense of humor, as far as she knew. After all, he didn't exactly crack a smile at her "zombine" joke back in the underground streets of City 17, and she hoped he'd do a little better than give her a cheesy garden gnome right after her near fatal injury.<p>

But Alyx didn't really see this as a giftâ€"after all, Gordon was practically babysitting it the whole way through their little adventure. He originally found it after sneaking his head around in that one shack where they contacted the rest of their group at White Forest as he was trying to look for spare health packs, yet for whatever reason he decided to take it. Alyx thought at first that he took the gnome for some gravity gun fodder, though that theory was shot when she realized that when Gordon tried chucking it at a zombie, it did more damage to the gnome itself than to the stumbling headcrab. Yet he picked it back up and took it with him anyway, placing it to the side and taking a moment to mow down some antlions with shotgun shells or blow them up with some explosive barrels lying around, before picking the gnome back up and continue strolling along like nothing happened. Alyx remembered its bright red hat out of the corner of her eye just sitting there as she got attacked by that Hunter, poor Gordon piled under some rocks. \_Oh god, \_she thought, suddenly backing away from it. \_It's like it was just happily watching us die or something.\_

She took a moment to shake her head with a sigh as she realized how ridiculous she was. It's just a freaking gnome, not the son of the devil or something. Besides, that was who Doctor Breen was, anyway. But even then, when her thoughts finally re-circled through her mind and her eyes weakly opened to the hymns of Vortigaunts and the relieved sigh of Gordon, that damn gnome was still there. Gordon had to believe it was worth carrying that whole way, and apparently shield it from antlion attacks, as she later found out about the

swarms that tried to re-kill her. She could even make out its bright white beard while she was handling the scope of the sniper rifle, Gordon running around with it and avoiding the zombies as best he could. But \_why? \_What was so special about it that he felt such a big need to carry it this far? Did it have some sort of weird chemical in the paint that Gordon recognized and hoped they could use it to their advantage? Was it heavier than she thought and was actually filled with something dangerous, like explosives or something? Was it just because its stupid smile is so damn unnerving that Gordon just hoped it would scare everyone off?

Gordon suddenly hopped back in the Jalopy, his suit no longer complaining about any lacerations or low battery power or whatever was bothering it before. Gordon himself looked to be in better shape than he was earlier—he probably finally found a med kit, Alyx thought—though he was still covered with the yellows and reds of the blood from the various enemies they stepped on today. He looked at the gnome and grabbed it, shoving it into the back area of the car and slipping it between the two seats, before starting the engine and taking off. It rattled wildly as they traveled up the gravel road, adding more dents and scratches to its already rather worn paint job. It knocked the back of Alyx's head a few times before it suddenly flew out of the car—Alyx was hoping that would be the last that she'd see of it, but this had become something of a standard procedure now. Gordon let out a sigh, stopped the car, hopped out, grabbed the gnome, shoved it into the back once again, and then they were on their way. They only got so far before they stopped in a group of abandoned farm buildings and were ambushed again—this was the, what, third time now? The Combine were certainly getting desperate. The battle was admittedly rough—many Combine soldiers were shooting at them, along with a few Hunters—but Alyx couldn't believe her eyes as she watched Gordon take the gnome out of the back of the car and run for cover, gently placing it down before tossing a grenade out and blowing up a few Combine in front of them. He then proceeded to shoot the rest with an AR2, making the Hunters yelp as they started bleeding artificial liquids. Alyx refocused on the battle and did her share of shots, taking out a few Combine that were trying to take down her and Gordon. But Gordon didn't seem that concerned about being shot at all—in fact, he seemed more worried that that damn smug on the gnome would get full of bullets instead. When the dust cleared and the sounds of traveling Combine were no longer around, Gordon and Alyx picked up their spoils of war and got back in the car, the gnome taking its forced place behind the seat—and once again, they only drove about thirty feet before it wildly flew out of the car.

Alyx could see that Gordon was getting tired of this. She almost let out a snicker, either of amusement or just pity, as she watched Gordon take out the gravity gun, pick up the gnome, chuck it several yards ahead of them, get into the car, drive to meet up with it, and repeated. It seemed to be working better than their strategy before, since the gravity gun was definitely going farther than attempting to drive with the gnome in the back, and Gordon repeated this process at basically any moment he could, even when they were being followed by that chopper for a while. When their car broke down and Alyx stuck with the rebels that helped fix it, Gordon had left the gnome standing there, right on the table, almost like he was telling Alyx "Here, watch this, I'll be back in a second." She felt so much more relieved when he finally took it, so she didn't have to stare at its creepy face anymore, but once again they went through their several

different unsuccessful strategies of trying to carry it as they continued their way to White Forest. Alyx could almost see the terrified look at Gordon's face when some zombies had knocked it out of his hands onceâ€”nevermind the fact that she was getting wacked by them as well, or anything. He would shoot the zombies, then immediately run over and grab the gnome, checking its condition as though it were an antique. It was almost as if he treasured the damn thing more than Alyx right now.

When the coast was finally clear of enemies, and Gordon had gone back to trying to shove the gnome behind them before falling out quickly, Alyx let out a sigh and gently shook her head behind the palm of her hand. They had eventually reached White Forest, but only after many hours stalling and trying every possible thing to transport the gnome without it flailing out or being kicked around somewhere else. She looked at the gnome as they exited the car, its bright paint all chipped and scratched with silvery scars, before she looked at Gordon, whose brow was permanently furrowed with the stress and annoyance this stupid garden ornament was causing him. He seemed almost relieved, however, knowing that they were finally at White Forest, though she wasn't exactly sure why he brought it all the way here. She was afraid to even ask, wondering if Gordon had finally lost it.

"Hey uhh, Gordon?" she finally let out, as they strolled into the old missile base, Gordon practically hugging the little piece of heavy-duty plastic. "You know you could have just asked me to carry that for you, right?" Gordon stopped, gave her probably one of the coldest stares she'd ever seen from his piercing green eyes, and opened his mouth as though he was about to say something, shockingly, before he turned around and walked ahead of her, that gnome still tightly in his grip. She wasn't sure what happened to it after that, for the next time she saw Gordon he seemed to be missing his little buddyâ€”but wherever it was now, she was sure, it was probably having it easier than it did on their trip here.

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><p><em>My usual three hyphens as a separator for the footnotes aren't working, what is this sorcery?<em>

\_Anyway. Like I said, it was a short little story, but I hope you enjoyed it and thank you for reading! I welcome any and all feedback, and I hope I'll get to hear from my old fans and my new readers :D Thanks again for reading and I hope most of you survived that three year gap since my last Half-Life story (and I hope this doesn't sound bad after a near two-year absence from writing-this certainly won't be the only one for another two years, though!)\_

End  
file.